



# FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2020

## AVAILABILITY OF LACTATING COW MASTITIS TUBES

As many of you will already be aware, there are currently significant supply issues with milk cow tubes for treating mastitis. **Tetra Delta** (nationally the most used tube) has been unavailable for several months due to manufacturing problems with no new stocks likely until May at the earliest. Other tubes such as **Multiject** and **Synulox LC** are also unavailable for the foreseeable future and **Lactalox** and **Ubroyellow** have ceased production permanently.

The better news is that there are no supply problems with **Ubrolexin**, a broad spectrum tube which is licensed to give a course of 2 tubes at a 24 hour interval between the 2 tubes and a milk withhold of 5 days after the second tube, and we also have supplies of **Ubroyellow** and **Combiclav** tubes whilst stocks last. Boehringer are also launching **Ubropen** tubes which is a penicillin based product ideally suited to treating *Streptococcus Uberis* and *Staphylococcus Aureus* mastitis cases.

The limited tube options available for treating mastitis together with the Red Tractor antibiotic audits and pressure to reduce antibiotic use, and in particular “off data sheet” use of antibiotics, mean that this is an ideal opportunity to re-evaluate your incidence of mastitis, likely pathogens, treatment regimes and success of treatments.

To discuss mastitis control strategies and treatment protocols please speak to one of the farm vets.



## VACCINATION FOR CATTLE BEFORE TURNOUT

Having just endured the wettest February on record, with land everywhere totally saturated and Rathmell Bottoms resembling a boating lake, turnout time for cattle may seem a very long way off! It is however time to start thinking about protecting cattle against diseases they are likely to encounter through the summer months.

In the spring, prior to turnout, is when the majority of breeding cattle are vaccinated against BVD and Leptospirosis. In addition to single annual boosters for animals already in a vaccination system, previously unvaccinated animals may require a course of 2 injections approximately 4 weeks apart to become fully protected (**Bovela** BVD vaccine just requires a single injection followed by annual boosters). It is recommended that the initial vaccination course should be completed prior to service to avoid the production of BVD PI calves, so consideration needs to be given to which animals are going to be served through the summer months. Last year there were supply problems with Leptospirosis vaccine with many herds having to use **Spirovac** vaccine rather than **Leptavoid H**. Animals vaccinated with **Spirovac** last year can receive their booster vaccination with **Leptavoid H** this year.



Farms that vaccinate heifer replacements against lungworm will also need to vaccinate calves over 2 months of age with 2 doses of **Huskvac** 4 weeks apart, with the second dose being at least 2 weeks prior to turnout.

For further advice on the most appropriate vaccination programmes to use on your farm, which vaccines can be given at the same time, and which worming products may be most appropriate after lungworm vaccination, please speak to one of the farm vets.

# REDUCING LAMB LOSSES IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS

## COLOSTRUM QUALITY AND QUANTITY

The most important factor in lamb survival is whether a good immunity to fight infection is achieved by the lamb receiving an adequate amount of good quality colostrum in the first few hours of life.

Top quality ewe colostrum has high fat and antibody (IgG) content to supply good energy and immunity levels to the lamb. Good body condition score, protein and mineral status of the ewe are all critical to producing good quality colostrum. A fact that is often overlooked is that around lambing, a ewe has an increased water requirement to enable her to produce colostrum and milk. A mule ewe with twins or triplets requires up to 10 litres of water per day!

The amount of colostrum required by a lamb is substantial.

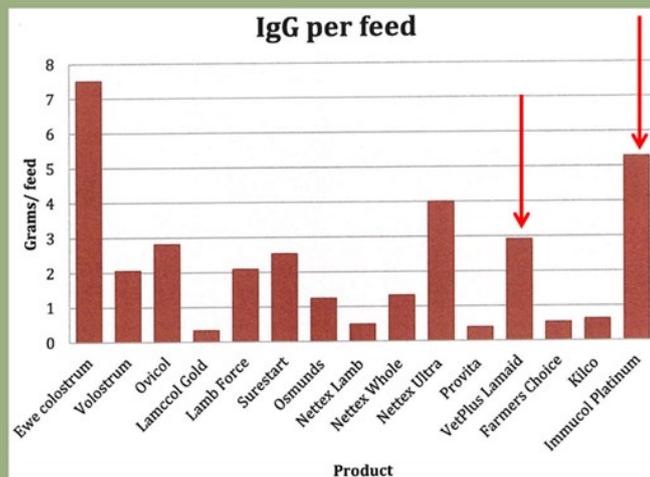
- Good quality ewe colostrum contains 50gms of antibody (IgG) per litre at birth
- A ewe that has been lambed for 6 hours has colostrum which contains 30gms/litre of antibody
- Good quality cow colostrum contains up to 35gms/litre of antibody
- Artificial colostrum substitutes are very variable in antibody levels – the best (**Immucol** or **Lamaid**) containing approximately half as many antibodies as good quality ewe colostrum.



## COLOSTRUM SUMMARY

**Lambs require at least 50mls/kg of good quality ewe colostrum in the first 6 hours of life and in total at least 200mls/kg in the first 24 hours.**

## COLOSTRUM



Mass of IgG contained in recommended feed volumes of colostrum supplements.



## USE OF PREVENTIVE ANTIBIOTICS IN NEWBORN LAMBS

In an ideal world our lambing sheds would be clean and dry, every lamb would get plenty of good quality colostrum, there would be no build up of infection in buildings as lambing time progressed and no lambs would show signs of illness! The reality is that there is always a build up of infection in pens as lambing time progresses and vulnerable lambs, twins and triplets, often don't receive adequate colostrum.

To control diseases such as watery mouth and joint ill, antibiotics are essential in the modern lambing shed. Unfortunately we are seeing a lot of resistance of disease causing bacteria to antibiotics.

The results of a recent study into how effective certain antibiotics were to E.coli, the bacteria that causes watery mouth, are shown below:

Resistance to Watery Mouth—E.coli		
PRODUCT	ANTIBIOTICS	RESISTANCE
Terramycin	Tetracyclines	52.5%
Spectam	Spectinomycin	29.8%
Synulox	Amoxicillin clavulanate	23.7%
Norodine	Trimethoprim sulphonamide	13.9%
Orojet	Neomycin	11.2%

This means up to half of the commonly used antibiotics are not working for watery mouth on our sheep farms!

This is a scary fact! We need to slow down the development of resistance and protect the drugs that are still working on our individual units. Consideration of some of the following points will help to achieve this:

**PREVENT PATHOGENS INFECTING THE LAMBS:** Dip navel twice in strong iodine, disinfect feeding tubes, teats and bottles between lambs. Keep pens as clean and dry as possible, use lime or antibacterial powders when the pens can't be completely cleaned out and dried.

**FOLLOW THE MANUFACTURER INSTRUCTIONS:** Administer medications as instructed by the manufacturer ensuring the correct dose is given and the medicine is stored correctly. Using low doses or partially effective antibiotics speeds up resistance.

**USE TARGETED PREVENTATIVE ANTIBIOTICS** (such as **Spectam, Orojet**) only on the vulnerable lambs not likely to have had enough colostrum such as triplets and hard lambings. **Blanket treating every lamb speeds up resistance hugely.** Consider waiting until later on in lambing time when there is a build up of pathogens before you start using preventative antibiotics at all. Red Tractor Farm Assurance is very keen that we can demonstrate that rattle belly preventative treatments are **targeted to the most susceptible lambs.**

**TARGET SPECIFIC DISEASES** such as Joint Ill by knowing your farm trigger factors and using antibiotics **at the correct time.** On many farms the joint ill bug is **not** infective in the first few days, your antibiotic given to a new born is **days too early.**

**REHYDION GEL**

Many lambs can be slightly acidotic at birth which can result in delayed sucking, delayed abomasal emptying and potentially an increased susceptibility to rattle belly. **Rehydion** is an oral gel containing an alkalinizing agent to correct acidosis, a 2ml dose of which can be used as an aid in the prevention of rattle belly as an alternative to antibiotics.



## WORMING ADULT EWES AROUND LAMBING TIME

In the winter months worm larvae ingested by the ewe don't complete their development straight away but become inhibited (dormant) L4 larvae in the stomach wall. Around lambing time the ewe's immune system becomes suppressed allowing the inhibited larvae to complete their development resulting in a rise in faecal worm egg output from 2 weeks before until 6 weeks after lambing. This can cause a significant increase in pasture contamination and therefore an increased worm challenge for growing lambs.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT TIME TO CONSIDER WORMING ADULT EWES IS AROUND LAMBING.**

Whichever wormer is used it is important that it is effective against the inhibited L4 larvae that ewes are carrying at this time of year. So as not to encourage further development of anthelmintic resistance it is recommended to leave a proportion of ewes untreated, usually the barren ewes or ewes carrying single lambs.

Other considerations to bear in mind are whether to use a wormer with a persistent action (such as **Cydectin** drench) so the ewes can help to clear the pasture of over wintered larvae and further reduce the challenge to young lambs, or whether a combination fluke and worm treatment should be given.

To discuss whether to worm your ewes, which product may be most appropriate to use, whether to dose before or after lambing, which sheep to leave untreated etc. please speak to one of the farm vets or SQP's.

# ABORTION CONTROL IN SHEEP

Any farm experiencing over 2% abortions, premature lambings or weakly live lambs is likely to have an infectious cause of abortion present in the flock. It should always be assumed that any ewe which aborts is potentially contagious to other sheep and isolate her from other ewes and remove any aborted lambs and afterbirths as soon as possible. Even if the flock is fully vaccinated against Enzootic Abortion there are other infections such as Campylobacter and Salmonella which make isolation essential to prevent spread from ewe to ewe.

Because the various causes of abortion have differing control options and future vaccination strategies, it is important to have samples from aborted lambs and their afterbirths tested to determine the exact cause of the problem. Be aware that many of the causes of abortion can potentially infect humans as well, so strict hygiene measures such as wearing gloves should always be observed when handling abortion material. **Anyone who is pregnant should stay well away from lambing pens and have no exposure to any material from sheep that may have aborted.**

If bringing abortion samples to the surgery for testing, please contact the surgery first to make sure appropriate samples are being submitted (we can tell as much from the afterbirth as from the lamb), that all samples are double bagged and leakproof and **do not bring samples into the reception area of the surgery**. There is a yellow bin by the lambing pens to leave the samples in and then inform the receptionist that they have been left.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.



## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

### BVD STAMP IT OUT

The "BVD Stamp it Out" scheme runs until October 2020. Farms with breeding cattle are able to have free testing carried out to see if the disease is present on the farm as well as up to £440 worth of further testing if the disease is found to be present, plus free advisory time.

Our practice has an entitlement for up to 100 farms to register – we have currently had over 80 carry out the testing. If you would like to be included for free testing, you need to attend an initial meeting, although the testing can be carried out before the meeting. The date for the next meeting is yet to be decided but to register an interest please contact the surgery.



## ENZOOTIC ABORTION VACCINE

For anyone thinking of vaccinating hogs against Enzootic Abortion as they return from wintering we have an option of ordering some short dated (expires either end of April 2020 or end of May 2020) **Cevac Chlamydomphila** vaccine at a reduced price.

The vaccine is available in 20 and 50 dose bottles and will result in a significant saving over longer dated vaccine. For more information contact Anne or Louise at the surgery.

## MESSAGE REGARDING FARM PARCELS

Just like you, we are especially busy at this time of year! Please could you make sure that parcels to be taken to Gisburn Auction Mart on Thursdays are ordered by 3pm on the Wednesday.

**Orojet** – we are only getting Orojet in to order because it has a short shelf life (expiry June 2020) so please ring the day before to order if you require this product.

Many thanks – Anne and Louise

March  
2020



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